

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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CONFESSIONS OF A CARETAKER.

A SERIAL STORY.

By "RITA."

Author of "*Dame Durden*," "*Darby and Joan*,"
"*My Lord Conceit*," etc.

CHAPTER XIV. INFATUATION.

I WENT back to Mrs. Cray's with a very heavy heart.

Of course I saw how it all had come about, only too plainly. The mutual attraction of that first meeting; the sympathy and suitability of the two young, impulsive, romantic natures. There had been no thought of danger to either—at first. There never is, or there would be no unhappy love stories in the world for poets to write of, and sentimental folk to weep over.

That slow, subtle drifting, with closed eyes and unconscious hearts, up to the danger point, where temptation, and pain, and misery set in. How often, how often I have seen it! In more cases, perhaps, than friends or foes ever dreamt; in more cases than husbands or wives themselves suspected. For human nature is terribly human, despite restraints, artifices, and conventionalities.

It is not always the mournful face that hides the heaviest heart. Sometimes, when lips were laughing, I have watched the eyes, and I think tears would have seemed less sad than the look I have seen. I have wondered what the history was that was hidden from the world; what brought the sudden tremor to lip and hand; the sudden pallor to bronzed cheek of man, or fair, flushed face of woman.

With gay words, and fashionable jargon, and indifferent laughter, and careless, cynical philosophy, the men and women of

the world play their part; yet here and there one notes the weariness, languor, and disgust underlying the jest and the philosophy; and, in so noting them, one can but wonder why they should deem it worth while to act and pretend, and be untrue to themselves for the sake of a society their better natures must despise. It is a mystery indeed.

Mrs. Cray was at home when I went in, and apparently not in the best of tempers. She put a few questions to me, which I answered very shortly. I had no idea of telling her about Mr. Tresyllion, or what I had seen and suspected.

That night she told me she was going to write, and sent me off to bed as usual. I was so worried about Miss Kate that I could not sleep. I tossed to and fro, and my head began to ache as if it would burst, and at last, in despair, I got up and resolved to go down to the kitchen and make myself some tea. I heard the hall clock strike twelve as I went softly down the stairs, and past the dining-room door.

I thought I would knock and tell Mrs. Cray that I was about the house, in case she should be alarmed at the noise; but as I paused there on the mat a sound startled me, and my hand dropped.

It was the sound of a champagne cork flying off. Then a voice—Rex Tresyllion's voice—fell on my ear.

"Give me a tumblerful, Pauline. I'm nearly dead with worries and vexations. I need something to pull me together."

I was too amazed to move—Rex Tresyllion here, at this hour, alone with Mrs. Cray!

"Well!" I thought, "this is Bohemianism with a vengeance!"

I suppose I am neither better nor worse than most of my sex, if I confess to the

humiliating fault of curiosity. For the first time in my life I was guilty of the meanness of listening.

Mrs. Cray's voice answered him. "My poor boy—and what has worried you? Won't you tell me?"

"Oh," he said, "it wouldn't interest you. Never mind, Pauline. I came to you because you always rest and comfort me. You are the only woman I know, who does that."

There was a moment's pause. Then she said in a hoarse, choked voice: "I wish to Heaven, Rex, that I could take every care and trouble in the world off your shoulders and bear them for you! I would do it gladly—for your sake."

A sob seemed to break her voice. I think she must have left her seat and thrown herself down by his chair.

"Oh, Rex, Rex!" she cried, passionately. "I can't help it—I can't bear it any longer. I must speak or I shall die. Didn't you see what your words—your looks were doing? Scorching my heart with a very madness of passionate love, destroying all the peace and content of my life! I tried to live it down; to stamp it out. I might as well try to forget I live, and suffer."

"Good Heavens, Pauline!" he cried. "Are you mad?"

"Perhaps"—she said. "But you shall hear me, you must. Why have you come here as you did?—sought me, flattered me, tortured me? Did you think you were the sort of man that a woman could only care for in the cold sense that friendship means? You have taught me one lesson, that life, and experience, and my world had failed to teach, and if you hate me, or despise me after to-night, I cannot help it. Your presence is like life to me. Your very step in the street, your voice on the stairs will make my sick heart throb, live, rejoice! Oh, Rex, you knew, you saw—you are not so blind that it needed words like—these."

"No," he said. "I saw—I know. For Heaven's sake, Pauline, get up. Why should you kneel to me. I am not worth any woman's love, and yet you care—you care so much."

"More than my life," she said.

In the stillness came one deep sob—a stifled murmur. I was cold as ice.

"Say you don't despise me," she went on, passionately. "Say it, Rex, or, as I live, I will not wait to see another sun rise on the shame and sorrow of my wretched life."

He may have argued with her, or accepted that homage to his vanity at cost of mutual self-respect. I don't know; and I cannot say. I only remember that I crept away, sick at heart with shame, and shut myself in my own little attic, and thought, "Is the world all mad; are women all fools; has life no better thing in it than this love, for which they are wrecking themselves, and all good gifts which they may possess?" "Oh, Miss Kate!" I said to myself again and again, "oh, my dear! what an escape for you; what a blessing for you that in time you had the strength to see your danger. He is utterly, utterly worthless."

For, indeed, so it seemed to me, knowing nothing, as I did then, of that strange sense of honour which sometimes makes a man refrain from humiliating a woman too deeply; which, for sake of the love he has won unsought, will make him as chivalrous as if that love were a guerdon, not a shame; which rends his heart with pity as the whirlwind of the weaker creature's passion rocks him in its frenzied blast, and so leads him on to pretend the love she has never awakened, and to suffer the ignominy and despair she never suspects.

But other lessons and other experiences had to teach me that. On this night I blamed him as much as I hated him; and I only longed to know Miss Kate was safe out of his reach or knowledge, and resolved to tell her what he really was, if only to cure her of her folly in time.

Mrs. Cray had the grace to keep her room all next day. I saw and heard nothing of her till the evening, and then, after preparing her usual meal, I told her that the place did not suit me, and that I must leave her service.

She looked very much astonished and put out, and argued with me for ever so long. But I was quite firm; my mind was made up, and I kept to my resolution.

That night's post brought me a letter from Miss Kate, saying that she was leaving for Devonshire next day.

Oh, how glad I was to hear it! How proudly I told myself that she, at least, was safe, and that time would heal the smart, and that she would be her bright, merry little self again!

Ah me! as if fate ever did what we expect and desire; as if it does not blind us first to danger, and then let loose all possible risks and temptations across the path on which our feet are set.

The whole of that month, my last month with Mrs. Cray, I did not once set eyes on Mr. Tresyllion. But I knew he came there, for all that; and I knew, too, that the new book got on very, very slowly for all the hours that were supposed to be given up to it. Now and then she would dash off fragments of ideas and thoughts as mad as herself, I think. I used to pick up scraps of paper in her bedroom, or the dining-room, with the oddest things written on them. I give a few here :

"How little women understand men when they try to rule them. . . As if the strongest bond is not the one that is never seen."

"To bore a man, is to give the death-blow to his love. Never let him feel you exact anything—only that he is yielding, not that you are compelling."

"The art of knowing when 'to let men alone' is the one art that seems impossible to women who love them. . . There is just a point to which passion may be led without straining. . . . Never reproach your lover when he is irritable or weary. Never implore him when his impulse does not answer the prayer of your eyes. To know when to caress is as necessary to love, as to know when to be silent is necessary to true comradeship."

"The passion of jealousy is a descent into depths of humiliation. Be jealous, but never betray it to the rival who excites it, or to the man whose love you crave, or possess, or would keep."

"When a man fears to tell you of any trouble, any folly, any mistake, his love is on the wane. Withheld confidence is a spur that goads conscience, and irritates him into further wrong-doing for mere desire of forgetfulness. Love is too sharp-set not to be easily blunted; the edge may be set again, but it is never quite the same—clear, polished, unmarked by the grindstone of circumstance."

"Misery is the spur that goads passion; comfort the leading rein that guides love. Do not blame; do not reproach; do not seek to detach your lover from habits, tasks, and inclinations, which are to him as second nature. It may be easy to win, it is hard to hold. When you have learned that secret, love has nothing more to teach."

"Let a man once feel that he can come to

a woman for sympathy as well as love, for comprehension as well as sympathy, for companionship in his good or bad moods, for laughter as for tears, for sorrow as for joy, for stimulus as for soothing, for passion as for content, and he will ask no more save to rest on her heart, and love, and be loved."

I used to wonder she did not publish all this in a little volume, and call it, "Pauline Cray's Philosophy of Love." I am sure it would have had a wide circulation, and done an immense amount of good, besides initiating the inexperienced.

I suppose she was happy at this time. I don't know. She never said a word to me, and I suppose never dreamt that I suspected what was going on.

I think she was as absolutely, madly, blindly infatuated as ever woman was. Yet she was clever enough to keep her charm for him, even after that humiliating self-betrayal. She grew positively beautiful at times, as if the fire in her heart had lent her youth, charm, brilliance.

I looked at her with a sort of wonder on those evenings when I knew she expected him, wondering if, indeed, she could be the same woman—careless, slovenly, erratic—into whose service I had entered a brief twelve months before.

I suppose there is a sorcery about love that is quite beyond explaining. It certainly seems to me that it is the one strong ungovernable passion, on which human lives are wrecked; so wantonly, so carelessly, so irrationally, that one can but hold one's breath and gaze in stupefied wonder and ask—"Why?"

But I did not call Mrs. Cray's infatuation "love." It seemed to me a hot, cruel caprice that had fastened on this man from the first hour his handsome, laughing, boyish face had looked back to hers, on that fatal Sunday night.

Mrs. Cray had often said that she was fond of discerning and analysing character, though whether she had formed a correct judgement it is not for me to say. She was quite clever enough to know something about the world she lived in, and the life she described.

When one knows the world, one ceases to expect miracles from the men and women who make it what it is.

Self-sacrifice is only possible to a great nature. Mrs. Cray's was not that by any manner of means; but I had no right to sit in judgement upon her, no right to hint

even at her folly, or the lengths to which it might lead her.

I left her at the end of the month to go to a place I had heard of, in the country, as housekeeper to a doctor.

We parted very good friends. Perhaps she was relieved to think I was going away. I don't know, but I could not help thinking it as I saw her eyes fall before mine when I mentioned her husband's name. And, really, I felt as if I were leaving a mine with the train laid for explosion, and only the match wanted, as I drove off from the little house in Bruton Street.

CHAPTER XV. "THE PITY OF IT!"

I HAD written to Miss Kate telling her that I was leaving Mrs. Cray's and had found another situation, and she wrote back to ask me to come to Templecombe for a few days, before going to the new place.

I therefore travelled down to Devonshire, glad enough of the excuse to see my pretty darling again, and wondering, all the long journey through, whether I should find her in better spirits.

I had never seen her married home, and was surprised to find what a grand and beautiful place it was. I had tea in the servants' hall when I arrived, and did not see Miss Kate until after the late dinner, when a message was brought me to go to her in the boudoir.

It was such a pretty, dainty room—the very setting for its dainty, little mistress; but as the door opened, and I went in, and she rose to greet me, I felt a sort of shock and terror at the change I saw in her.

She was dressed in white: something loose, and soft, and fleecy, and with no particle of colour about her, and her face seemed to have grown terribly thin and pale, and there were dark lines under the soft, brown eyes that made them look strangely sad and wistful.

"Well, Jane!" she said, quite cheerfully, and smiled up at me.

Now, whether it was the smile, or the look, or the effort that made both so infinitely pathetic, I don't know; but I felt the tears rush into my eyes and nearly blind me as I took both the little outstretched hands in mine.

"Have you been ill, Miss Kate?" I cried, involuntarily.

"Do I look ill?" she said, and glanced at the mirror opposite. "Oh, no. I am

quite well, really. The—the season has fagged me a little, that is all, and I haven't had time to recoup myself after such unusual dissipation. Come and sit down and talk to me. You are going to another situation, you said. What a restless old Jane it is."

She pushed forward a chair, and sank into another by the bay-window, which was wide open, and showed the beautiful grounds and the sloping terraces, and the moonlight gleaming softly over the quiet trees.

I sat down opposite to her as she bade me. The room was dimly lit by one lamp on a table at the other end. Her delicate face and head were thrown into faint relief, and seemed to me to have something almost unreal about them.

For a moment or two I could not speak, only sat quietly watching her, and at last she turned to me with a poor little effort at a smile, which soon died away.

"Why have you left Mrs. Cray?" she said.

For the life of me I could not help starting. I had forgotten that she would be almost sure to ask that question, and I could not tell her the truth. I felt my face grow warm, but the friendly darkness doubtless concealed it.

"I—I was not comfortable," I said. "She is such a strange woman, turning night into day as she does."

"Is she—is she a good woman, do you think?" Miss Kate asked suddenly.

Her voice was not steady, and the little hands that lay loosely clasped on her lap, trembled visibly.

"What do you mean by a—good woman?" I said.

"Is she true and honourable? Would she be a safe friend for—for a man?"

"That," I said, somewhat dryly, "depends very much on the man. If he were young, handsome, clever, erratic——"

She raised one trembling hand to her face, and half turned from me towards the open window.

"Don't let us talk about it," she said, almost fiercely. "What good can it do? And yet—— Oh, Jane, Jane!" she burst out, passionately, and threw herself on her knees by my side, and hid her face on my lap. "I sent for you," she said, "because it seemed as if I would die if I didn't hear something—something. Tell me—you have seen him since—since that day? Is he well—happy? Do you think he ever remembers——"

"Oh, Miss Kate!" I said. "You must not—indeed you must not think of him like this. Believe me, he is not worth it. He was only amusing himself with you; he is a selfish, unprincipled man. Even if he were not, what good would it be now?"

She sprang to her feet as suddenly as she had thrown herself down, her small hands clasped tight, her eyes flashing and glowing in the dusky gloom.

"Say that again," she said, hoarsely; "say that again. 'Amusing himself with me!'—Is it true, Jane? By Heaven above, if I thought so——"

"Oh, hush, hush!" I cried, horrified at the passion I had evoked. "Be calm, Miss Kate, for Heaven's sake! Sit down there as you were doing, and I will tell you the whole story. I never meant to do so; but it is better. It will cure you of wasting thoughts and feeling on a worthless man."

There was agony in the dark eyes that rested on my face—the agony of a creature that awaits its death blow. But I only thought then of the sharp pain that would prove its own best cure, and I looked away from her to the dark, still night and the heavy shadows, where the moonlight gleamed from time to time.

"I said it, my dear, because I know it to be true," I answered her at last. "He is evidently a man who spends his spare time in making love to married women. The evening of that very afternoon, you remember——?"

"Yes," she said, in a strange, hushed voice.

"He came to—to Mrs. Cray's," I said. "It was late. I had gone to bed; but I had to get up about midnight, and go downstairs for something. As I passed the dining-room door, I heard them talking."

"You—you are sure," she cried, sharply, "it was he—Rex?"

"Quite, quite sure. She called him by his name, and I know his voice so well. He was there so often."

"Yes," she said in the same stifled way, "I know; he told me so himself."

"Well," I went on ruthlessly, "I heard enough to convince me that Mrs. Cray allowed him to make love to her. That he, on his side, knew she was in love with him."

There was a moment's dead silence. I was terrified as I looked at her face. The agony, the shame, the horror, the disgust that swept over it. She rose and stood leaning against the window, her hand

clasping the silken curtains as if to support herself.

"To think," she said in a husky, stifled voice, "that I—I—should live to suffer for a man's amusement."

I rose, too, but I did not dare to touch her. I was afraid. I stood there silent, waiting for the storm to pass; hoping and praying it might pass in a tempest of tears and sobs, as so often I had known her varying moods to do.

But no. She turned to me at last—white—cold—still.

"Thank you, Jane," she said. "I suppose it is the truth you have told me—not something cruel and disagreeable, 'for my good,' as you used to say of the powders you were so fond of giving me."

"Miss Kate," I said, "it is gospel truth as sure as I live."

She held up her hand to stay further words; then it dropped, and was pressed convulsively to her heart.

"I am rightly served," she said. "I deserve no one's pity—even my own. I—I had no excuse, save that I never dreamt of danger until it was too late. But, oh! how I hate him—hate him! I feel as if I could not breathe, live, exist, in the same world where he is now. I feel——"

She broke off abruptly; a strange, fierce little laugh, rang out on the stillness. "Jane," she cried, and her hand closed on my own like a vice, "if my turn ever comes, if a day ever dawns that tells me I can deal back the suffering and humiliation dealt to me, what a revenge I will take for to-night!"

"Oh, Miss Kate," I cried, "Miss Kate, don't talk so wickedly!"

"Am I—wicked?" she said, suddenly; and her strength seemed to go, and she sank back in her chair, and looked at me in a stricken, helpless way. "I suppose I am," she said. "I ought to have no such feelings—no such thoughts. I ought to have remembered who I was—that romance and sentiment died for me at the altar, where John Carruthers made me his wife. I ought—but I could not help myself. Before I cared, I never knew my danger; afterwards—it was very little use."

She hid her face in her hands; her whole frame shook with a shiver as of mortal cold.

"We will not speak of this again," she said presently. "Never again, after to-night. I will go back to duty. Surely, it can't be very hard to be content when one has so much in life to make one so. I was

quite happy two months ago, Jane. Quite happy, before this wretched, feverish, restless excitement took possession of me."

"And you will be quite happy again, my dear," I said, gently. "Believe me, you will. Far, far happier than if you knew the—the feeling was mutual. Far happier than Mrs. Cray. I am sure she cannot be happy."

"Not happy!"—It was a new mood now that swayed the passionate, impulsive little heart.—"Not happy, and his eyes are looking back to hers, and his voice telling her he loves her—and his lips——"

A great flame of colour swept up to her brow. "Why," she went on tempestuously, "I would have died willingly, only once to hear him say he loved me; only once to have felt the touch of his lips on mine."

"Oh, Miss Kate," I cried in horror, "you must not talk like this. You must not. For Heaven's sake, remember——"

"I can remember nothing," she said, fiercely, "until I have worked the mad fit out of me; so let me be, Jane, and if I shock you too much, go down to the servants' hall again."

"Well," I sighed, despairingly, "whatever there is in Mr. Tresyllion for two sensible women to go mad about, beats my powers of comprehension."

"Oh," she said, growing suddenly calm, "my madness will be brief, believe me. It is when I grow sane that I am to be feared."

"Miss Kate," I cried, imploringly, "have you no thought how foolish this is, how wrong?"

"Wrong!"—it was the tempest breaking loose again—"wrong, do you say? As if I hadn't told myself that a million times, and as if that boy's blue eyes hadn't swept away the memory of the telling at the very next glance. As if I didn't know the full extent of my folly—that I am a wife, a mother, a woman who should have done with dreams, and desires, and all that means the poetry of life, and youth, and makes earth heaven! Oh, Jane, what is the use—what is the use—what is the use? I can't help myself. It must be driven out somehow, I know; but you must give me time, Jane; you must give—me—time——"

And then suddenly she swayed forward, and, with closed eyes, fell like a stone on the floor at my feet.

VEGETARIAN DINNERS.

CONFRONTED by the accessories of the great Christmas festival; the cattle show, the congress of animals doomed for slaughter at the great cattle markets; the display of meat at the butchers' shops; the poulterers' windows crammed with all kinds of fowl and game; in the face of all this evidence of our present way of living, how is it possible to anticipate any general conversion to the principles of a vegetarian diet? The world must change a good deal ere such a consummation can be reached. But to this it might be replied that the world has changed, and is now changing with a rapidity that sets all calculations based upon the sleepy annals of the past at defiance. Old and settled habits go down like ninepins before the impact of new ideas, and once deeply-rooted convictions are torn up and scattered to the winds. Shall our English roast beef be brought down from its pride of place, and our plum-pudding, deprived of its suet, be reduced to its ancient condition of "porridge"? Shall the ox and the sheep become merely natural curiosities, exhibited at zoological gardens, where all the carnivora, declining porridge, have perished of inanition, and only harmless, sleek, herbivorous creatures are allowed to appear?

All this savours of Utopia, and yet there is an excellent and useful society which is pushing forward in this direction, and has its own press organ, and a considerable number of adherents. The Vegetarian Society does not, indeed, prescribe an exclusively vegetable diet. Its members undertake to abstain from fish, flesh, and fowl; but they do not renounce milk and its products, or eggs. These exceptions, however, are regarded by the rigid vegetarian as base concessions to human weakness. A strict professor, indeed, looks upon many even vegetable products with suspicion. "Bread may be allowed," writes one; but, evidently, he has his doubts about bread. For is not bread fermented?

So we are reduced to the ascetic dietary of Friar Tuck, without the venison pasty in reserve, something mild in pulse, or parched peas, which may be reduced to a paste for the sake of weak stomachs, moistened with draughts of water from the spring, or, more prosaically, from the tap.

But every school has its extreme disciples; and, after all, the vegetarian pro-

gramme in its milder form is not without attractive features. Many who are far from being converts to the vegetarian theory, will admit that our staple diet is too exclusively based on animal food, and that we consume—those of us who are not constrained to abstinence by hard necessity—an undue quantity of too solid flesh. But even here a wholesome change is in progress. The abundance and excellence of our vegetable supply far outstrips the growth of the trade in meat, and many vegetables are becoming articles of daily consumption with all classes which formerly were almost unknown. There are tomatoes, for example, once only met with in the form of an occasional adjunct to mutton cutlets—chops and tomato sauce—of which the fame has gone through all the world, in the case of Bardell and Pickwick. But who would have thought, in days not very remote, of eating the sauce without the chops? Yet in the tomato season costermongers' barrows are now loaded with this beautiful fruit, which finds ready sale among the humblest quarters.

Great, too, are the resources which the vegetable-markets place at our disposal. There is celery, of which cart-loads might have recently been seen, disposed of in back streets at a halfpenny a root; and what can be more delicious and wholesome than a dish of stewed celery with appropriate sauce? And as for sauce, with a tablespoonful of cream—now to be had close by everybody's door—and a morsel of butter melted in it, and pepper and salt, you have a sauce that is hardly to be beaten for any kind of fresh vegetable. The leek, too, treated in the same way, or served up on toast like asparagus, is to many palates more acceptable than even the latter dainty. But the true flavour of a dish of vegetables can only be appreciated when it is eaten as a separate dish; treated in our usual insular way, as mere adjuncts to entrées or joint, our vegetables lose half their value. But here the culinary art comes in, for vegetables cannot be made palatable as distinct dishes without good cookery. How much, too, a skilful cook can make out of a purée of good vegetables! And in the way of vegetable-soups there is abundant scope for all his or her talents; for in flavour and bouquet the various fresh and dried vegetables at the command of the cook are of almost inexhaustible variety. Less satisfactory are those soups which are thickened with tapioca or similar sub-

stances, and which assume a false air of being "grasse;" but they are greater favourites on that account with the general public.

For those who incline to vegetarianism, pure and simple, there is an abundant literature provided by the society. There are leaflets, pamphlets, brochures, books of more solid pretensions. "How to Begin," is the title of one of the leaflets, which seems to imply something of a wrench at starting. Then you have receipt-books of all kinds, and cookery-books, varying in price from a penny to several shillings. Thus we have "Three hundred and sixty-six vegetable menus, showing how we may dine for a year and a day, without resorting to butcher or poulterer;" and these are framed apparently on the more liberal scale sanctioned by the society. But here is a text-book of the strictest sect: "The Hygeian Home Cook-book, without Eggs, Milk, Butter, or Condiments." Or we may learn "How to Live on Sixpence a Day;" or, improving even upon this rigid model, "How to Live on a Shilling a Week;" or, again, in more general terms, "How to Live in the Street called Straight, a Book for Hard Times," assuredly a very seasonable volume, if it answers to its title.

But there is another great school of vegetarianism, attendance at which is compulsory, and which embraces a great majority of those working at poorly-paid employments; families who work hard at home from morning to night for a bare subsistence, and live, for the most part, on tea and bread, with the occasional luxury of butter. With such, however, vegetarianism is not much valued on its own account, and a bloater, or a "kipper," or, perhaps, a smoked haddock would be more valued than a dish of vegetables, however succulent. And it may be doubted whether the majority of vegetarian receipts, which mostly involve some delicate manipulation, and the employment of stew-pans, hair-sieves, and more or less elaborate apparatus, are altogether adapted for the homes of the poor.

It is rather for people who have means, however limited, with tranquil minds, and no great steep of work, or worry, upon their shoulders, that vegetarianism seems best fitted. But an occasional experiment of such a diet will do anybody good. Let us turn from the flesh pots of Egypt, every now and then, and make our way to a vegetarian restaurant. London has many

such establishments, and they are to be found in most of our chief cities, Manchester being, after London, the most abundantly supplied with vegetarian dining-rooms. In London these restaurants are now to be found in every quarter of the town, and the names they assume pleasantly recall, in their fashion, those of the coffee-houses of the last century, where so much of the wit, and fashion, and learning of the town used to congregate. There is the "Apple Tree"—indeed, there are two of them—within the City precincts. The "Orange Grove," in Saint Martin's Lane, "The Porridge Bowl," in Holborn; "The Rose," Finsbury way; "The Waverley," in the Borough; and, not far from Oxford Street, the "Wheatsheaf." In a general way there is an air of neatness and propriety about these establishments. You have tables topped with marble, or covered with snow-white cloths, artistic fittings, neat and generally nice-looking girls to wait upon you. Here are no clinging odours of departed joints, no stains of congealed gravy, nor is there the feverish clamour and clatter of a dining tavern in full swing. An air of decorous calm pervades the saloon, for anything like ferocious hunger is out of place in a vegetarian restaurant. A calm examination of the menu shows various soups at your disposal; some of which are of a savoury and nutritious character—a julienne soup, or *maigre*, is not at all bad, and gives a distinct impression of having commenced to dine. But it requires a little training to relish rice milk as a preliminary to a mid-day meal, and when it comes to porridge, which is even more in demand than soup by the regular habitués of the place, it strikes you that the taste for porridge in such a connection is an acquired one.

Yet porridge is one of the mainstays of the vegetarian régime, and a choice is afforded of sundry kinds. We may have maize mash and wheaten porridge; but the *pièce de résistance* is, naturally, the Scotch oatmeal. Scotchmen, indeed, seem less devoted than might be expected to their own historic diet, and are often found to consider it as merely a foundation on which to rear a superstructure of more substantial and stimulating fare. But in oatmeal, no doubt, we have a food substance of great value. It comes to us with a fine record of its own. What a race of men it has reared and nourished; what marches have been made, what battles fought, when the clansman, whether High-

lander or Borderer, was furnished with a bag of coarse oatmeal for all his supplies! It is food both for babes and strong men; but for the intermediate class—those who have survived infancy, but are not gifted with strong digestions—well, of these, every one must be guided by his own experience. But what an advantage has a man, who can thrive on such homely fare, over one who cannot move without his *batterie de cuisine*, his cooks and servitors; for surely he, whose needs are small, is almost independent of Fortune, and can await the turn of her wheel with a mind at ease.

But when the porridge or potage has been disposed of, the question of what is to follow presents a sudden and puzzling interest. Perhaps the menu contains a vegetable goose, which you shrewdly suspect to be the stuffing, minus the bird; or you are promised a lentil cutlet with tomato sauce; or, perhaps, steak-pie in a vegetable form, that makes you wonder whether there is such a thing as a beef-steak-tree, and if not, by what cunning alchemy the flavour of a rump-steak can be got out of pot herbs. Macaroni, in various forms, is always in favour; but that suggests the alarming reflection—for which Peter Parley is, perhaps, originally responsible—that the macaroni-eating *lazzaroni* of Naples are the very laziest of human creatures. Now, if this characteristic of theirs be due to what they eat, what a misfortune to fortify one's natural indolence by such a diet.

When it comes to the sweets we are on familiar ground. There are few things in tarts and puddings which cannot be made on vegetarian principles, that is, with the liberal allowance made by the association of such products of the farm and dairy as are not in the nature of flesh. Suet, of course, is not allowed; but even a plum-pudding may be made without suet, and, when we reflect that our Christmas pudding was, in origin, a plum porridge, made, probably, of boiled wheat sweetened and spiced, and with raisins of Corinth and raisins of the sun added thereto, it is likely that the vegetarian article more nearly resembles the early plum-pudding than does the ordinary article.

So far, our meal of soup, entrée, and sweets has only cost ninepence. It has been eaten among pleasant surroundings, served with neatness and despatch, and has certainly satisfied the cravings of hunger in a satisfactory way. We should find

much the same fare at a vegetarian table d'hôte such as is held at the new vegetarian hotel near the Strand, for sixpence. Such a dinner might not satisfy a Dandie Dinmont, or be held of much account in Liddesdale; but for Londoners, who live "chichement," like the fox in the fable, nothing can be better adapted. If we have no heroic labours to perform, why should we live heroically? Let us take our dinner of herbs and be content.

SOME TESTAMENTARY CURIOS.

THE whims and vagaries of testators seem to be of an endless variety. They have become proverbial. Almost daily we may notice paragraphs detailing bequests of a more or less extraordinary nature; and latterly the United States would appear to have been more prolific than other regions of singular wills. Quite recently, the late Lord Newborough made the following curious provision in his will. He gave most explicit directions that, after a certain period elapses, his body is to be exhumed and re-interred in Bardsey Island. This island, it will be remembered, lies to the north of Cardigan Bay, and is reputed to have had no fewer than twenty thousand saints buried in its soil.

Only the other day, too, Henry Eberle, of Frankfurt, left an estate valued at twenty-five thousand dollars to be expended in the erection of a monument over his grave. His will was executed in 1869, and gives minute instructions as to the monument. Three shares of the cemetery stock are bequeathed to the Cemetery Company, the income upon which is to maintain the monument in good repair.

A far more extraordinary will than either of the above, was, however, made by Solomon Sanborn, of Medford, Massachusetts, who was a hatter by trade. He left his body to the late Professor Agassiz and Dr. O. W. Holmes, to be by them prepared in the most skilful and scientific manner known to anatomical art, and placed in the anatomical museum of Harvard College. Two drumheads were to be made of the skin. Upon one was to be inscribed Alexander Pope's "Universal Prayer," on the other, the "Declaration of Independence"; and then they were to be presented to the testator's "distinguished friend," the drummer of Cohasset. This presentation was subject to the condition that on the seventeenth of June, at

sunrise, every year, the drummer should beat upon the drumheads at the foot of Bunker's Hill, the spirit-stirring strains of "Yankee Doodle."

Another American, who died within the last few months, reflects in his will that he was shunned by his relatives, "who cannot, now that I am dying, do too much for my comfort." But Dr. Wagner takes on these relations a ghastly revenge. To his brother, Napoleon Bonaparte, he bequeaths his left arm and hand; to another brother, George Washington, his right arm and hand; and to others his legs, nose, ears, etc. Further, the testator leaves one thousand dollars for the dismembering of his body.

Among other testators who have displayed this remarkable tendency to leave legacies in the form of portions of their bodily frames, or the frame in its entire condition, may be instanced Dr. Ellerby and Jeremy Bentham.

The will of Dr. Ellerby, who died in London, in 1827, contained the following bequests: "I bequeath my heart to Mr. W., anatomist; my lungs to Mr. R.; and my brain to Mr. F., in order that they may preserve them from decomposition; and I further declare that if these gentlemen shall fail faithfully to execute these my last wishes in this respect, I will come and torment them until they shall comply."

In spite of this threat, however, the beneficiaries declined their legacies.

Jeremy Bentham, again, bequeathed his body to a hospital, with instructions that his skeleton should be prepared and cleaned, and his head preserved entire, and that he should—when thus treated—preside at the meetings of the hospital directors. Whether he was ever made to actually preside is doubtful; but it is certain that the skeleton was preserved, and may now be seen in the hospital museum. The preservation of the head was, however, blundered, and one of wax had to be substituted.

Many wills have references to the domestic felicity, or the reverse, experienced by those who executed them. As an example of the former, we may give the following passage from the settlement of Lady Palmerston, an ancestress of the celebrated Premier. Referring to her husband, she says, "As I have long given you my heart, and my tenderest affections and fondest wishes have always been yours, so is everything else that I possess; and all that I can call mine being already yours, I

have nothing to give but my heartiest thanks for the care and kindness you have, at any time, shown me, either in sickness or in health, for which God Almighty will, I hope, reward you in a better world." Then, for "form's sake," follow several specific bequests.

As a specimen of the opposite sort, we may first of all instance the will of Mr. Rogers, of Dublin. In April, 1888, Mrs. Rogers disputed her husband's will in the Dublin Probate Court, on the ground of his deficiency of testamentary capacity. The will contained the clause: "In consequence of the ill-behaviour and bad conduct of my wife, I cut her off with one shilling, and she is not to have either hand, act, or part in the management, supporting or educating of my children." The evidence showed that the deceased was jealous of his spouse, who at the time of the marriage was eighteen years of age, while he was seventy. The Jury found a verdict establishing the will. Henry, Earl of Stafford, again, inserted the following in his testamentary disposition: "I give to the worst of women, who is guilty of all ills—the daughter of Mr. Grammont, a Frenchman—whom I have unfortunately married, five and forty brass half-pence, which will buy her a pullet for her supper—a greater sum than her father can often make over to her—for I have known when he had neither money, nor credit, for such a purchase, he being the worst of men and his wife the worst of women in all debaucheries. Had I known their characters I had never married their daughter, nor made myself unhappy."

Another gentleman bequeathed to the partner of his joys and sorrows his "bitter contempt for her infamous conduct;" and a Colonel Nash made the subjoined provisions. He bequeathed an annuity of fifty pounds to the bell-ringers of Bath Abbey, on the condition that they should muffle the clappers of the bells of the said Abbey, and ring them with doleful accentuation from eight a.m. to eight p.m. on each anniversary of his wedding day; and, during the same number of hours only, with a merry peal on the anniversary of the day which released him from domestic tyranny and wretchedness. A Mr. Luke of Rotheringham, who died in 1812, also left bell-ringers legacies, though under different circumstances. His will is a most extraordinary document. He left a penny to every child who should attend his obsequies, with the result that over

seven hundred youngsters were in attendance at the funeral. All the poor women in the parish were bequeathed oneshillings each. The bell-ringers were left half-a-guinea each "to strike off one peal of grand bobs" at the exact moment the body was inearthed; and seven of the oldest navvies were to have a guinea for "puddling him up" in his grave. An old woman, "who had for eleven years tucked him up in his bed," was to have one guinea. A singular endowment was made, whereby forty dozen penny loaves were to be thrown down from the parish church steeple, at noon, every Christmas Day for ever.

A German bequeathed his effects to a poor man, whom he intensely disliked, on condition that he always wore linen underclothes without any additional underclothing; while John Reed, the gas-lighter of the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, concluded his will thus: "My head to be separated from my body, duly macerated and prepared, then to be employed to represent the skull of Yorick in the play of Hamlet." Stanislaus Poltmarz left the greater part of his fortune to a Hungarian notary, forbidding him, however, to take possession until he had sung in La Scala or San Carlo opera houses the parts of Rossini's "Otello" and "Elviro" in "Son-nambula." He was eighty years old when he executed the will and wrote: "I do not dispose of my wealth in this manner for the sake of being thought original; but having been present four years ago at an evening party in Vienna, I heard Mr. Lotz (the notary) sing a cavatina from each of the operas with a beautiful tenor voice, therefore I believe him likely to become an excellent artist. In any case, if the public hisses him, he can console himself easily with the three million florins which I leave him."

In 1805, Mr. Edward Hurst left a very large fortune to his only son on condition that the latter should seek out and marry a young lady whom the father, according to his own statement, had, by acts for which he prayed forgiveness, reduced to the extremity of poverty; or, failing her, her nearest unmarried female heir. The latter, by the irony of fate, turned out to be a spinster of fifty-five, who, professing herself willing to carry out her share of the imposed duty, was duly united to the young man who had just reached his majority. Somewhat similar to the above was the will of a Mr. Furstone, who left seven thousand pounds to any man legiti-

mately bearing the name "Furstone," who should discover and marry a Furstone.

Many valuable bequests have been made to dogs, and other domestic pets. The will of one Garland, who died in June, 1888, contained this clause: "I bequeath for my monkey, my dear and amusing Jocko, the sum of one hundred pounds per annum, to be employed for his sole use and benefit; to my faithful dog, Sheek, and my well-beloved cat, Tib, a pension of five pounds; and desire that, in the case of the death of either of the three, the lapsed pension shall pass to the other two, between whom it shall be equally divided. On the death of all three, the sum appropriated shall become the property of my daughter Gertrude, to whom I give this preference among my children because of the large family she has, and the difficulty she finds in bringing them up." A Mrs. Elizabeth Hunter, in 1813, left two hundred a year to her parrot; and a Mr. Harper settled one hundred per annum on his "young black cat," the interest to be paid to his housekeeper, Mrs. Hodges, as long as the cat remained alive. Dr. Christiano, of Venice, again, left sixty thousand florins for the maintenance of his three dogs, with a condition that, at their death, the sum should be added to the funds of the University of Vienna.

An old Parisian lady bequeathed fifteen hundred a year to her butcher, whom she had never seen; while one man chalked his will on a corn-bin; and another inscribed his on a bed-post. Both the corn-bin and the bed-post are said to be filed in Doctors' Commons. Perhaps the whimsical will of a Scotch gentleman, who, having two daughters, bequeathed to each her weight, not in gold, but in one-pound notes, has been frequently quoted. At any rate, the elder of the two was considerably lighter than her sister, for she only got fifty-one thousand pounds, while the younger received fifty-seven thousand, five hundred and forty-four pounds. The three or four instances of wills in poetical form have also been often quoted, and do not require reproduction here. But, in conclusion, we may give the following curious clause in the testament of a New York gentleman: "I own seventy-one pairs of trousers, and I strictly enjoin my executors to hold a public sale, at which these shall be sold to the highest bidder, and the proceeds distributed to the poor of the city. I further desire that these garments shall in no way be examined or

meddled with, but be disposed of as they are found at the time of my death; and no one purchaser to buy more than one pair." The sale was actually held, and the seventy-one purchasers each found in one of the pockets bank-notes representing a thousand dollars.

REST! REST! PERTURBED SPIRIT.

A COMPLETE STORY.

IN a room, opening directly on to the verandah of an Indian bungalow, lay a man, apparently about sixty years of age.

From the pallor of his cheeks, the sunken aspect of which betokened advanced disease, and from the restless way in which he plucked incessantly the light covering thrown over him, it was easy to see that he was not long for this world.

He was attended by a slight, young girl, whose present office it was to fan him. As she fanned, he talked; but however much his words affected her—and affect her they did, for there was a great and abiding love between this man, her father, and herself—she showed not the slightest emotion, but fanned, fanned, fanned, and listened.

"Had it not been that he disinherited me, Zenia," said the sick man, "you would have been a rich woman. But my mother's hatred pursued me, and Eustace became my father's heir. That caused a difference between us. When I am dead, dearest, you must leave this place, and take the first steamer to England. Directly you arrive in London, go to my old friend, Mrs. Hunt. Her address is here in my pocket-book. For the sake of old times she will befriend you." A few more desultory words, a sigh or two of weariness, and Zenia's father slept.

The afternoon waned, the sun went down, and with scarcely any "between time" or gloaming, darkness fell upon the sultry earth.

Then the girl put down her fan, and stole out on to the verandah. Here, seated on a low wicker-chair, she abandoned herself to her great and hopeless grief. The doctor had told her that any shock, any display on her part of trouble or distress, would in all probability end his life suddenly. But here—out here, with him lying quietly asleep inside, and no one to look at her, she might for a while throw off all trammels of restraint and weep without hindrance.

The moon had risen, when the sick man

roused from his sleep. It flooded the tropical garden with its beams, and illuminated just that part of the verandah in which Zenia sat with a ray of mysterious-looking light.

"Zenia," cried the invalid, "come here, my child. I have had such a beautiful dream. I thought that you were in England with my brother Eustace, and that, after all, the old place was to be yours. You had reconciled past quarrels, darling, and all was well again."

"Were you there, father?" asked the girl, tenderly. "I should not care to be there, if you were not."

"I there, Zenia? No, dear; I was in my grave. But, oh, so happy to think of you with Eustace. Promise me you will go to him, Zenia—now, at once. Give me your promise."

With wondrous energy he raised his poor, wasted form from his couch. His daughter, fearful lest such unwonted exertion should do him harm, gave the required promise readily.

"Tell me where he lives, father," she asked.

But the sick man made no reply. Slowly, very slowly, he sank back upon his pillows. A great change of colour, as of a filmy grey gauze veil thrown across them, overspread his features; his eyes, like the eyes of a hunted animal, sought Zenia's, with a world of sorrow, pleading, and anxiety in their expression. Zenia Mordaunt spoke, at first, tenderly and quietly; then with entreaty and in great distress. But her father took no heed; his eyelids dropped, his breathing ceased, and, when in a little while the friend who had housed these wanderers—for such they were—entered the room, he found only one living being there; the man was dead.

The child's future was by no means a rosy one as at that time forecast. She was to go to England—that was certain. It was found that a sufficient sum of money for her passage and incidental expenses had been put aside by her father for the purpose. Beyond a few rupees, nothing now remained for her but this, and those few rupees should have belonged to the man who had housed them, for they were the price of the poor father's burial. Search as they might, however, no clue could be found to the whereabouts of Eustace Mordaunt, if Mordaunt were his name. The chances were that it was one assumed only by the dead man, who had apparently lived under some sort of a cloud. So

Zenia had only her father's old friend Mrs. Hunt, to whom a letter had at once been sent, to depend upon; and it was with the idea of proceeding to London, and finding her, that she took her passage and stepped on board the steam-ship "Eastern."

She was an attractive girl, this Zenia, and a good one, too; and the admiration she gained on the steam-ship "Eastern" was as sincere as it was unsought. From the Captain to the stewardess, this young and friendless passenger was the object of all kinds of solicitude. She was so quiet, so unassuming, and, as well, so sad, that interest in her was universal; interest totally opposed to sensation, however, and exhibited in different forms by each who affected it. Thus the Captain gave her a kindly, encouraging word whenever he came in contact with her; the cook sent little dainties which he thought might tempt her appetite—when cooks take fancies to any one they immediately endow them with a capricious appetite, to which it is necessary to pander—the stewardess was ever ready to wash out little laces for her, or to tack clean tuckers into her bodices; and the ship's doctor obligingly buried all allusions to his profession, and, instead of dwelling on the horrors of seasickness and the predisposition of a traveller from India to that unwelcome experience, brought her books and newspapers, and sat by her sometimes on deck when he had time.

He was concerned for her; he noticed how apathetic she was, and how sadly, if patiently, she accepted her present life. Her melancholy loss had been communicated to him by the friend who had brought her on board, and it was with feelings of more than ordinary interest that he studied her character and conduct.

One afternoon he was by no means sorry to have a real excuse for rousing her from the lethargic reverie into which she had been plunged almost the entire day, seated under an awning in her deck-chair, with papers and books about her, at which she rarely, if ever, looked.

"It would be kind of you," said he, "if you would tear this linen into strips and roll it neatly and tightly for me, ready for use. I have a patient downstairs who is very ill, and I fear I may run short of bandages. Will you help me, Miss Mordaunt?"

"With pleasure," answered Zenia. "But your patient—has she a nurse with her?"

"My patient is a young man," replied the doctor.

"Nevertheless," interrupted Zenia, eagerly, "he must want a nurse. Can I be of any use? May I read to him, fan him, sit by him, do anything for him? Ah, Dr. Scott, if you only knew how much nursing I have done, and how desolate I am now! I can be trusted. Will you not try me?"

The doctor glanced away from the pretty pleading figure before him for a moment. He was a man of tender feelings, and this outburst was a revelation of suffering to which he could scarcely reply without a tremor in his voice.

"Come with me," he said at length, "and we will see what can be done." In an hour's time Zenia was installed as nurse to the young man, who lay so ill in his cabin.

His emaciated cheeks, with the burning patches on each, his lustrous eyes, his white thin hands, pointed to some lung affection. But Zenia did not ask what ailed him; no, not even his name, which she had never heard; her only aim was to ease, to comfort, and, if possible, to cure the patient before her. Her quiet energy was untiring; her devotion immense. To her it seemed as if once more she were doing something for the father who was dead; to the sick man, who benefited by her ministrations, she came as an angel in human form. For a few days her ceaseless care, her unwearied solicitude, the brightness which her calm presence dispensed around, the confidence her womanly strength inspired, were of immense advantage to the patient, who palpably improved.

So far did this amendment progress that Zenia was deceived, and looked forward to a time, not far distant, when she would sit by her invalid's side, on deck, under the awning, instead of down in the cabin.

But they had the Red Sea to pass through, and the doctor knew well that to hope to get him through the Red Sea alive was more than foolish. So when he languished and grew worse directly the good ship "Eastern" entered that sea, only Zenia and her patient were surprised, and spoke hopefully of how much better he would be in a day or two more, and how they would certainly be sitting then under the awning on deck.

To his very last hour the sick man hoped, and Zenia knew no other feeling than sure expectation of his recovery. Had he not already made wonderful progress, and was not this new languor satisfactorily accounted for by the intense heat they had had these two days?

One evening he slipped off his finger a ring which he habitually wore.

"Put it on your largest finger, nurse," he said to her, playfully, "and wear it in memory of the Red Sea."

Afterwards in her cabin Zenia looked at the ring. It had apparently been intended for a mourning token, and in the inside of the ring, words were engraven as follows: "In memoriam, Eustace Despard, Obiit, May the twenty-first, 1848."

Eustace—the name immediately arrested Zenia's attention. It was that of her father's brother. Surely, surely, this sick man could have no connection with her uncle, and yet it was possible, since Eustace was no common name. She determined to ask her patient. Yes, she would go at once, though their good-nights had been exchanged, and he was probably asleep by this time. If he were, of course she would not arouse him; but if he were not, and it was discovered that he and she were relatives, oh, how joyful a thing it would be for her! How thankful she would be thus soon to find the Eustace her father had bidden her seek out!

In haste she ran from her cabin to the one the sick man occupied. She knocked at the door, and was not surprised that no reply was given. But presently it was opened an inch or two, and the ship's doctor stood before her.

"May I speak to him for a moment, Dr. Scott?" she asked.

"Not now, child," replied the doctor, barring the small opening with his arm.

"He is asleep, then," thought Zenia, "and I would not for worlds disturb him."

Disturb him? Nay, child. He sleeps the sleep that knows no waking; and once more thou art bereft.

Unconscious of trouble, Zenia hurried up the stairs for a whiff of air, and as she stood looking out at the clear heavens, and drinking in the cooler atmosphere of night, a strange thing happened to her.

Suddenly in front of her appeared a tall, thin man, apparently of about thirty years of age, dressed in a suit of light homespun. His hair, which was dark, was thrown back from a high, pale brow—this Zenia noticed as he raised his hat to her. His cheeks were bronzed; his eyes sparkled; his manner was eager, anxiously so.

"Excuse the liberty I take," said he, "but I am most desirous of knowing your name. Will you so far oblige me by telling me what it is?"

"My name," answered the girl, with

her usual quiet delivery, "is Zenia Mor-daunt."

"Not anything else?"

"No, nothing else."

"I thank you sincerely. Good-night."

Zenia returned the greeting, and went back to her cabin.

It was not until the next morning that she heard of her friend's death. The sad event was communicated to her as she paced the deck very early, by the doctor.

"Was he dead when I came last night?" she asked, in a whisper.

"Just," was the reply. "His end was very sudden, as such often are. He did not know himself that he was dying."

A solemn sight, indeed, is a burial at sea. The young man was consigned to the deep that very evening.

But Zenia was not present. The shock of his death had utterly prostrated her, and seemed to bring all over again, with redoubled force, the sorrow of her previous loss. But she was, as ever, very patient and uncomplaining; and a few days saw her once more seated in her deck-chair under the awning, with books and papers around her, just as they had been before. Every one was again kindness personified; and, among travellers and crew, she was universally compassionated and cherished.

One passenger more frequently than any other sought her out, and this was the young man in the homespun suit, who had accosted her on the evening her patient died. He came to her side only when she was alone; at which times he would talk to her most kindly, and never wearied of listening to her stories of her father, of their wanderings together, of her mother, who had died when she was a baby—in short, of anything that concerned her. Nor did it appear strange to this rather reticent child that she felt so much at ease with him, and liked to tell him of her past life. As regarded the others, even the doctor, she received, rather than gave, confidences; from this man she received none, and gave many.

At last the good ship "Eastern" reached its destination; and Zenia had only the last stage of her journey, by cab, to make. On the day of disembarkation, and for two or three previously, the child had not seen her new friend; and the doctor, whom she consulted as to his whereabouts, could not help her in the least, for he said he did not know the man. She was obliged, therefore, to bid him good-bye

in her own mind only, and to leave unsaid the words of heartfelt thanks which she had resolved she would speak to him, for all his kindness to her. He had told her nothing as to his future plans, and the chances were, she sorrowfully thought, that they would never meet again. But as she got off the ship she felt a hand grasp her own, and turning, once more beheld her comrade.

"Will any one meet you?" he asked, quietly, ignoring her exclamations of surprise, and eager questionings as to where he had been the past two days.

"Meet me? No," replied the girl, "they would not know what time the 'Eastern' got to port. What a lovely evening for my landing. Is it so lovely always here in England?"

"Not always," was the smiling reply.

Then he escorted his charge to a cab, shut the door upon her, and raising his hat, suddenly turned and left her.

"Shall I see you again?" cried Zenia, a wave of utter loneliness overtaking her as she hastily let down the cab window and looked out at the crowded dock. In vain, he was gone.

But Dr. Scott stood there instead, beaming with satisfaction that he had at length torn himself away from the clutches of some departing patient, in time to say farewell to his young friend.

"You were looking for me, then," he said, cheerily. "I have just put the Dawsons into their carriage, and am so glad to have a last peep at you. How well you have managed with your luggage, and so quickly too. Well, cabby, what is it?"

"Must move hon, sir, by horders," responded cabby. "What address, please?"

"Thirty-one, Travers Street, Cavendish Square," answered Zenia; and with a hearty handshake and a "God bless you" from Dr. Scott, the child was driven away.

It was rather a shock when the cab drew up at 31, Travers Street, to find the house in total darkness. All the lamps in the street were alight, for the red ball of fire that had welcomed Zenia to England with lurid pennons of orange and purple, had now sunk to rest, and all the surrounding houses showed points of light. This only was in darkness.

Indulgent cabby descended from his box and rang the bell; it was more than he was in the habit of doing for his fares, but this one he told himself was different, and had just come from a voyage, poor, lonely young thing.

Once, twice, thrice, he rang, and no one answered. Then he descended the door-steps and took counsel with Zenia.

"Seems to me, miss," said he, "as if there ain't no one there."

"Try once more," responded Zenia; and once more a resounding peal echoed through the house, and cabby stood in meditation.

"That done it," he cried at last, triumphantly, and the clanking of chains and pushing back of bolts bore witness that cabby was right.

A moment more and Zenia stood by the door, face to face with an old caretaker.

"Yes," assented she, "Mrs. Hunt do live here, leastways did, for she's dead now, poor thing, and so can scarcely be said to reside any longer in this vale of sorrows. Not but what she's above ground yet, a-lying in her Devonshire 'ouse in state, having died there three days ago; so, perhaps, I might still be permitted to say she do live here, miss, after all."

Zenia gasped.

"Did she—did Mrs. Hunt expect me?" she faltered, tears rising to her pretty eyes, and the colour fading from her face.

"Not as I knows on, miss," replied the old woman, slowly. "But stay, I remember my missis having a letter the day before she went to Devonshire, which were not long ago, she having caught cold on the way, which caused her death; and of her answering it, and leaving it with me until called for. Perhaps you are that young lady. Stay, so as I mayn't be cheated, let's say the name together, miss, and if either's wrong, you are not the lady meant."

So together, syllable for syllable, Zenia and the woman pronounced the name, Zenia Mordaunt, and the woman ran for the letter. Then she directed the cabman to "up" with the boxes; and he, having "upped" with them, and departed, Zenia was led by the woman into a little room, which should, said she, "soon be made comfortable and fit for a queen."

Here the poor child read her letter. It was brief, and to the point:

"Mrs. Hunt," ran the note, "has no recollection of any old friend answering to the name of George Mordaunt; but as Zenia Mordaunt is friendless in London, she may stay at Mrs. Hunt's house, on the night of her arrival in England, and must travel on to CombeJesmond, in Devonshire, where Mrs. Hunt is at present residing, on the day following. Arrived there, if Miss Mordaunt can make good her tale,

and satisfy Mrs. Hunt as to her identity, and the identity of her father with a friend of old days, Mrs. Hunt will be glad to do all in her power for her."

Had Mrs. Hunt been alive, this missive would have brought but cold comfort to the child. But with Mrs. Hunt dead, comfort of every kind fled away altogether. What was she to do? The good old caretaker advised her to the best of her ability.

"Go down to Devonshire, dearie," said she. "My old missis had a housekeeper of wonderful brain. The brain that woman has is not to be believed. I'll back Mrs. Parker to help you out of your troubles, my dear; indeed, I shouldn't be surprised, and neither would many I could name—only you wouldn't know 'em—if Mrs. Parker weren't Mrs. Hunt now, or as good, seeing as the old lady hadn't any relations, except distant, living."

Sorrowful at heart, Zenia sat by the fire-side alone, while the caretaker busied herself with making arrangements for the night.

Suddenly the door of the apartment opened, and her friend of the homespun suit stood by her side.

Up started Zenia, much excited.

"Oh!" she cried; "this is strange. How did you know I was here? I called out to you, 'Shall I see you again?' but you had disappeared. How glad I am you are here! Come to the fire, and sit down. I am in trouble, my kind friend."

"And I am come to help you," answered the young man, "if that may be; tell me what you will do."

"The old woman here advises my going down to Devonshire," answered Zenia, forgetting to mention that Mrs. Hunt was dead.

"Then Mrs. Hunt does live at Combe Jesmond?" returned the young man, eagerly. "Oh, how strange! how very strange. But is she well? Is she there?"

"She is dead," answered the child.

Then said he:

"That is as I imagined; but yet," he added, more to himself than to Zenia, "I feel that all will yet be well; better, far better than I in my wildest, happiest moments ever believed it would be. But, come, dear, let us talk about Combe Jesmond."

"You know it?" asked Zenia.

"Yes, I know it," he replied. "I once lived there. I know it very, very well."

He looked at the burning coals of the fire, as if he saw in them the place he said he knew so very, very well. There was a tinge of regret or sadness in the tone of his voice as he spoke, which Zenia, with her quick perception, noted at once.

"Why don't you go back there?" she asked him, eagerly. "You seem as if you loved it, and wanted to be there. Why don't you go back?"

"Because," he answered, "I would much rather be where I am now. It is scarcely possible to leave a much-loved place, without regret; but even Combe Jesmond, lovely and dear as it is to me, is not so dear, nor so lovely, as the place I now inhabit. But away with such comparisons. There is a poor, lonely old man, living at Combe Jesmond, whose history I should like to tell you, if you will listen."

"Indeed, I will," replied Zenia.

Still gazing at the ruddy fire, the young man spoke, the while Zenia leaned forward with her elbows on her knees and her chin resting on the palms of her hands in a child's attitude of attention.

"Many years ago," proceeded he, "there were two sons of a father and mother living at the old Manor at Combe Jesmond. The eldest, a fine daring fellow, some five years his brother's senior, was, for reasons known only to herself, utterly detested by his mother, who showered upon the younger not only his own due portion of love, but also, all that should by right have belonged to the elder born. The estate was not entailed, and when the father of these two boys fell ill, the mother used her power and influence to get it left to her beloved son.

"For a time the father resisted; but at length, with some vehement argument, the mother prevailed, and on his death-bed he signed a will, leaving to his elder son the merest pittance; to the younger, the entire estate and all else that he owned. In time, the young squire married; that is to say, after his mother's death. But his wife died very soon, leaving him with a son, a sickly boy, who grew too fast, and did everything else he ought not to in that way, and caused his father great anxiety. It was always supposed he never would be reared; but he grew to man's estate in spite of prognostications to the contrary."

"And what became of the elder brother?" asked Zenia, struck somewhat, she scarce knew why, by this story.

"It was never known what became of

him. Since his father's death, Combe Jesmond has not known him. Report said many things; but no one really knew the truth about him, poor fellow."

"Why do you say, 'poor fellow'?"

"Because I am sorry he was disinherited. I always felt sorry for that. You see, naturally his life was embittered by his mother's unmotherlike treatment of him, and the strange circumstance of his utter disappearance made his memory a very sad one. But my father's sympathies were against him, I grieve to say."

"Your father's?" asked Zenia, interrogatively.

It was the first time he had ever alluded to any relation of his own.

"Yes," was the monosyllabic reply, and Zenia, noting the rising colour in his cheeks, hastened to change the subject.

"Is this man you have told me of happy in his son? The estate does not seem to have brought him much comfort, since you call him a poor, lonely old man. Lonely, you said. Is his son dead?"

"His son is dead," was the quiet reply, and Zenia's fellow-passenger rose to leave her.

"I should like to go to the old place once more," he said, wistfully. Then his face lighted up with a great and joyful expression. "I shall go," he cried. "Good-night, little child. We meet again to-morrow, at Waterloo; so it is not good-bye. To-morrow—and Combe Jesmond! What happiness, what intense joy the thought is to me!"

He grasped Zenia's hand in his, and left the room, forbidding her either to ring the bell, that the old woman might open the front door, or to attend him herself.

The next morning, sure enough, just as the train started from Waterloo Station the young man stepped hastily into the compartment occupied by Zenia alone.

He was the liveliest of travelling companions, and as they sped along kept relating to the girl stories of the places they were passing through, helping her, as he said, to feel "at home" in this England she had never seen before.

"What a day," said he to himself, "what a day to leave it for ever; to carry away in one's memory the sights and the sounds of this beloved land! A still clear air, with a frost, and sunlight sparkling over fields white and crisp with rime. Look, Zenia, how that baby tries his weight upon that icy pool. It is almost the first frost he has seen. Take care, by-the-bye,

child, of this climate of ours. It is treacherous and variable, not like the Indian one you have left. But though treacherous and variable, how dear, how very dear—because it is England."

It was with an air of radiant happiness that he recognised the landmarks of the country as they approached Combe Jesmond.

"There is Langdon Church," he cried, long before the train reached that place. "Many and many's the time I have climbed to the top of the tower to get a view of five counties. Now, child, on this side is Hidbro' Beacon. You must go up there some day. And there is dear old High-beeches. Explore the trees, Zenia, and you will find two hearts carved on the bark of one, pierced with an arrow, and a ring beneath. That is what I and little Mary Monmouth carved many years ago; she the ring, and I the hearts pierced. Now, dear, give me your wraps and let me strap them up; we are flying through Hilton, and the next station is Combe Jesmond, where we stop. Did you see those red chimney stacks through the trees? Yes? Well, that is the house in which the poor, lonely old man, I told you of, lives."

Soon the train came to a standstill in the tiny station of Combe Jesmond. For a moment Zenia lost sight of her friend, while an obsequious porter, who opened the door, led her hastily away to claim her luggage at the van. But she found him again at the foot of the steps leading up to the station, seated in a low basket carriage.

"Get in, child," he cried, hastily. "They will send your luggage after you."

And before Zenia could turn to the porter who had not yet made his appearance with her trunk, she was whirled away at a mad pace from the station.

"You know the country very well," she said, turning to her companion. "Is it far from here to Mrs. Hunt's?"

But the young man made no answer, and after waiting for a moment Zenia looked somewhat timorously up into his face.

He was gazing ahead, as if to mark any obstacle that might suddenly come between him, and his wild reckless course. His profile was set, and looked as different now to the gay, boyish features of their railway journey, as darkness does to light. Recalling her wonted courage, Zenia took heart of grace, and caught hold of the cape of his inverness, which ever and anon, in the

wind they were passing through, flapped against her face.

"Is it the sight of your old home that makes you look so stern and sad?" she asked, raising her voice and her head that she might get nearer to him.

A wan smile crossed his features.

"I am playing a game of chance," he replied at length. "Riding a race with issues of immense importance in my hands. Directly I found you out, Zenia, and who you were, I was restless until I could accomplish happiness for you. Dear friendless, homeless child, the sick man's guardian angel, this world is too hard a place for you to live in, without a relation in it to smooth and brighten your path. And he of whom I spoke to you—that lonely old man, the world is harsh and unkind to him, too, despite his lands and money. I would not have him pine away in hopeless friendlessness—no, no; immeasurable joy be mine if I can prevent that, and at the same time bring happiness to you, my child. In perfect joy and gladness I shall rest when you two are united, as you will be, I trust, ere long. Remember, for your comfort, Zenia, when you think of me, that in doing what I am allowed to do now, the dearest hope of my life—ay, of my whole, my perfect life, is fulfilled. He will know it, when he knows you, and will tell you that he, too, is thankful at last."

They were whirling now through some open gates, that led up a long carriage-drive, with a wooded ravine on one side, and laurels and a fence on the other. Not one jot or tittle did the driver moderate his pace, though the road took twisty turns, and more than once the vehicle seemed in imminent danger of being over-set. At length, with a laugh, an exultant laugh, he pointed out with his whip a lighted row of windows in an upper storey of the house they now were rapidly approaching. On his face was a look of contentment. All harshness, all sorrow, all anxiety was gone, as he gazed down upon his companion with a beam of ineffable satisfaction.

"We are in time, little child," he gasped. "There was none to be lost, I see; but we are in time. Oh, Zenia, dear, dear little nurse, think of me sometimes, as I shall think of you so often, so often. I will watch for you, and wait for you, and welcome you, oh, so gladly! when we meet again. Is it time to go, now; is it really time? The wrench is

very bitter, but I go right gladly. Good-bye, dear child, good-bye; we meet again no more in this world."

"No more?" sobbed Zenia. "Did you say, no more?"

But she spoke to the wind.

The chaise was driverless; and the horse, trembling and frightened, with ears thrown back, and foam-covered mouth, dashed on madly at runaway speed.

Then Zenia knew nothing until she opened her eyes in a great old hall, to see before her an immense fire burning on the hearth; and above it a full-length picture of a young man in a homespun suit, who looked down upon her with a reassuring, loving smile.

"Are you better, miss?" asked a voice beside her. "Because when you are, the master says he would like to see you. He's very ill indeed; prostrated by a family bereavement, miss; but the doctor do say he've taken a turn for the better now, though he were bad enough an hour ago. You've had a narrow escape, you have, miss. You came dashing up to our front door in the pony-shay what went down to meet Mrs. Jerry, our housekeeper, coming back from Exeter market. Ben had only gone up to speak to his sister, the station-master's wife, for a moment, leaving the shay; and when he came down it was gone, and you run away with, miss, by young horse Georgie, who always were a goer, and a lover of his own stable, where he now is. Directly that young animal had disposed of you, miss, which he did by pitching of you on to the top step below the entrance-door, he offed to his own diggings in stables, which were, to say smallest, a cunning thing to do. But come, I stand chattering here while master waits, and you too, miss. I'll help you up the stairs, please."

But Zenia had not been hurt, and could walk alone.

In a few moments she stood by a bed, on which lay a sick man of about five and fifty years, very thin and aged-looking, with grey hair and refined features. Directing that a chair should be placed for the young lady, he told his servant to withdraw, and held out his hand courteously to the child.

"You have been hurt," he said, slowly, "by getting into my pony-chaise by mistake, and being run away with. Will you tell me whither you were bound, that I may let your friends know of your safety? For I cannot let you leave my house to-night. It is late and cold, and with such

a shock as you have had, great care must be taken of you."

"I was going to Mrs. Hunt's," replied Zenia, who then proceeded to assure her host that she was not in the least bit hurt, and could go at once if he liked.

"Nay, little girl, but I do not like. Ring the bell for me, please; Mrs. Jerry will be home by this time, and will look after you."

The child rose obediently, and essayed to pull the bell-rope, which hung by the sick man's side. Something on her hand, however, attracted his attention; for, with a sharp cry of pain, before she had pulled the rope, he clutched it and held it up to his eyes.

"Where did you get this ring?" he asked, eagerly, pointing to the ruby the invalid on board the "Eastern" had given her.

"From a friend who died on the ship that brought me from India," replied Zenia. "I may call him a friend, I think, for I helped to nurse him on the voyage; and he gave me this ring in the Red Sea the very night he died."

"What was his name?" asked the man, eagerly.

"I never knew it," answered Zenia. "He called me nurse, and I did not ask him for his name. There is one inside this ring; perhaps it was his. I was going to ask him, because——"

"Show it to me, please," interrupted the invalid. "This ring is, I believe, one I have known for years. The name should be Eustace Despard. Ay, there it is. Then it was my poor boy's, and you nursed him. Thank you, thank you. I am his father, and know so little about his last hours. How strange that you should have come here by this chance to tell me of my Eustace. He was never strong, my dear boy, and went out for a voyage to see what it would do for him. I always said he would come home cured, and would not really believe he was so ill. He should have been back yesterday had all been well; and he is lying at the bottom of the sea instead. Sit here, child, and tell me all you know about my son. Ah me, ah me! my dear son!"

So Zenia sat on a stool by the bereaved father's bedside, he holding her hand all the while, and drinking in the little details that she told him of the young man's last illness. Then she tried once more to find out whether this Eustace was related to the Eustace her father had spoken of as his brother.

"My father died in India," she said simply, turning her sweet face up to that of her new friend, and feeling involuntarily for the portrait she constantly wore beneath her gown. "Just before I came to England—I came at his request, indeed, and am on my way to Mrs. Hunt's (although I know she is dead) because he told me to go there before he died—he dreamed a happy dream, and told me to find his brother Eustace. But that I cannot do, because father died too quickly to tell me where he was."

The invalid lay back on his pillows with closed eyes.

"Is it possible?" he murmured. "And yet I know nothing of my brother, of his marriage, or his death. But it would be strange were it so. To think that my boy, who always begged me to find my brother and befriend him, should be nursed by his own cousin, not knowing her; and that chance should have brought her here. Tell me, child, what is your name?" he asked, tenderly, looking at the small, upturned, expectant face.

"I am named Zenia Mordaunt," the girl replied.

"Not anything else?" asked the invalid, eagerly, in the self-same words of the passenger on board the "Eastern."

"No," sighed Zenia, "not anything else."

Then a sudden idea struck the suffering man.

"Go," said he, "to that cabinet yonder, open it, and should you see any face there in the row of miniatures hanging on the rail, like your father's was, bring it to me."

Quick as thought Zenia went, glanced along the rail and detected the miniature of a youth, apparently about nineteen or twenty years of age.

"Here he is," she cried, triumphantly. "Here is my father. I know it to be him, because I wear his likeness always, and it is the same as this."

Then the two heads bent together over the miniature and its duplicate, which Zenia drew from her bodice.

"This is indeed my brother," said the old man, at length, "and I thank Heaven that you are my own niece, Zenia Mordaunt Despard. Ah, my child, my cruelty, and our mother's, drove my brother from this country, and often have I sworn that I would die rather than seek him out, though Eustace, my own boy, implored me to the last hour we were together, to do so. But now that you have come, I can, I hope, undo some of the wrong I have done; and you, my child, will be my daughter, in the

place of Eustace, my lost son. I am thankful to Heaven who sent you."

Not many explanations now were needed to identify the dead man, George Mordaunt, with the George Mordaunt Despard who was disinherited by his father in favour of his younger son. Zenia had papers with her, showing how her father had married, with certificates of her own birth and baptism.

Thus her father's dream came true, and Zenia, the daughter of the house, reconciled past quarrels.

Always, as she sits before the portrait that hangs above the fireplace in the great hall, Zenia thinks of the good comrade who brought her hither, and tears come into her eyes, despite the kindly, loving smile he has for her, and the peculiarly tender glance of his grey eyes, when she remembers his words, that they will meet no more again in this world.

I do not know, and cannot guess, whether she connects that comrade with the poor invalid cousin she nursed on board the "Eastern." To no one but to me did she ever communicate the history of her voyage, after her cousin's death, and even in telling me the tale she in no wise linked the two men together.

Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! Where thou art, perchance thou seest that union thou thyself didst wish for, and art happy.

"FOR SWEET CHARITY."

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

By B. DEMPSTER.

Author of "*Through Gates of Gold*," "*My Lady's Chamber*," "*The Mystery of Deadman's Flat*," etc. etc.

CHAPTER I.

It was said, in the days when the world was young, that the gods who were disobedient were sometimes banished from Olympus, and compelled to wander on this earth, making their dwelling among mortals, till, by many good deeds done, they had expiated their sins, and were allowed to return to the land of the gods from which they had been exiled.

It seemed to a girl—standing looking, one summer evening, over the fence that shut in her garden—that she saw one of these banished gods coming towards her down the narrow lane. The western sun fell full on his face, and she thought she had never seen a more beautiful one. It reminded her of a photograph her grandfather had, of the statue of the sun-god

Apollo. This man, coming slowly down the lane towards her, was tall and powerfully built; but walked with a careless ease and grace that carried off the height and massive strength of limb and muscle. He was sauntering along so very slowly, his eyes bent on the ground, that she had plenty of time to take in the whole of his beautiful manhood. She forgot herself as she looked, leaning forward, one hand resting on the fence, the other holding the roses she had just gathered in her garden.

Suddenly he raised his eyes and met hers in full. But, perhaps, the sun's glowing rays had dazzled his, for he stared straight at her, without seeming to see her.

She had turned her face swiftly, blushing hotly at having been caught looking, but too proud to hurry away. She glanced carelessly about her, then drew back, with affected indifference, from the fence.

But the man's dazed eyes had seen her at last. He stood still for one second in the lane. Then came hastily towards her.

"I am hungry," he said, with a slight smile, stopping on the other side of the fence, just opposite to her. "Can you, for sweet charity, give me a piece of bread?"

As he stood, the trees near them shut out the red light of the sun from his face, and, with its glory passed from it, it looked strangely pale and weary. The clothes, which a moment before had seemed fitting garments for his strength and grace, had become shabby, dust-stained, out-at-elbow. Whatever they might once have been, they were now a very mockery of the unmistakably aristocratic air of his face and appearance.

"I have eaten nothing since yesterday," he said again, in the same gentle voice, "and I am starving. If you won't take pity on me, I shall have to give it up."

"Are you—really hungry?" she asked, in a shy, awed voice. "Really—oh, wait a moment," and she turned and ran up the path through the trees.

The man looked after her for a moment, then the trees, in the golden light of the sinking sun, seemed to waver to and fro, as if performing some mystic dance about the slender, running figure, and his brain grew confused, and he began to wonder, vaguely, if he had spoken, or if it had only been a dream, that the pretty child with her shy, sweet eyes had told him to wait.

"Hang it!" he muttered, clutching at the fence and swaying unsteadily on his feet; then his hand relaxed its grip, and he sank heavily down into the dust of the road, sitting there, with his back leaning against the fence, his eyes closed.

How long he sat there he did not know. He was aroused from his semi-unconsciousness by feeling a cup of milk held to his parched lips, by hearing a frightened, unsteady voice begging him to drink.

The "child" was standing out in the lane by his side, with the cup of milk in one hand, and a plate of bread in the other.

"Oh! I am so sorry! Oh! please eat! I couldn't be any quicker. I had to wait till——"

She stopped, blushing hotly, and held the cup again to his lips. He was recovering now, and eagerly drained the milk to the last drop. Then she held out a piece of the bread, which he took and ate ravenously. There was more of the mortal in him than the immortal, and he seemed very hungry indeed. But all her quaint fancy was lost now, in her eager distress and concern. She had read somewhere, that when men are starving, they must be fed at first only in small quantities; and in spite of his evident impatience and disappointment, she would only break him off small pieces at a time, carefully holding the plate out of his reach, as if she were afraid he would snatch it from her.

"I say—give me the whole slice," he pleaded eagerly. "If you only knew how very hungry I am! I could eat the plate too!"

"But it might kill you!" in anxious alarm. "Oh!——"

With gentle swiftness he had taken the slice from her hand, and a moment later it was gone. He laughed softly at her dismayed face. Then, before she knew what he was going to do, he had caught the skirt of her dress and pressed it to his lips. Then his white face flushed a dull red, and he stumbled to his feet.

"I was starving, and you gave me food," he said, in an odd, hoarse voice. "But you have given me something better even than that. You have given me back light!"

She had drawn swiftly back, terrified at his strange manner. The country lane was lonely and silent. It was her grandfather's right of way, and he allowed no trespassers. The house stood a good way back in the garden. There was no one near. Perhaps

her face betrayed her, for he flushed again, and laughed a short, bitter laugh.

"Do I look to have sunk so low?" he exclaimed, "or do you think me mad? Perhaps I am mad. I've been a fool for so long. What can I say to you for the supper you have given me? I can't thank you. I feel such a brute for having asked you for it. I never thought I should have come to begging. Though I was starving, it isn't the food that has saved me. It was that look in your face—that note in your voice. Do you know what I was thinking of, as I came along? How I was to get a pistol to blow out my brains. I feel that I can pull along without the pistol for a little longer. Good-night; and if there is a God, may He bless you!"

He turned sharply away, and the next moment was striding on again down the lane, the red light of the sun once more shining on his face and on his powerful figure. But not even its shining could cast a glamour over him now. She could only think of it falling on the pale, drawn face, the desperate eyes, the travel-stained, ragged clothes. Then a sudden rush of tears dimmed her vision, as she stood looking after him; and when her eyes cleared again, he had turned the bend in the lane, and disappeared from sight.

She walked slowly back to the house, and that night went supperless to bed. Such an unheard-of piece of extravagance as giving food away, would never have been forgiven; so she dared not ask for more. As it was, she had had to wait her opportunity of slipping out of the house with her supper, for she had given her own to the starving man who had fainted by their garden-fence. She lived there, in the old, rambling house, with her grandfather, and the old man and woman who waited on him. They lived by rule, on a plan of economy which was next door to penury. Her grandfather ought to have been a rich man; but, by the treachery of a relative, he had lost almost everything. The losses had affected his brain. He was possessed of a mania to screw and save, till he had made up the sum out of which he had been cheated. An impossible task; but it was the only hope and pleasure left in his life.

The old man and woman who had known him almost all his life, sympathised with his craze, and helped him to the utmost. The girl, who had been left to the care of her grandfather, when a child of nine, had grown accustomed to it, and, knowing no

other life, was fairly happy and contented. But no screwing nor pinching could affect her morally. She was the same to-day, at seventeen, as she had been at nine—when she entered the penurious household. And so, to-night, she had slipped out and given her supper to the starving stranger; and so, too, she lay awake to-night, forgetting her lost supper in thoughts of the man who had had it. Who was he? What was the strange mystery of his destitution, his despair, his misery?

What was he doing there starving at their gates? His eyes haunted her. She trembled again, with a curious feeling, half fear half something else, which she could not analyse, as she remembered the strange, wild way in which he had kissed the folds of her dress. And she fell asleep at last, crying a little over the mystery, and dreamt of the story she had read, of how Apollo had once done penance on the earth; and it seemed to her as if the sun-god came to crave her charity as she stood among her roses, and that he had eyes like the stranger she had spoken to that night.

CHAPTER II.

"Oh yes, he had another son; but he is never mentioned. He did something very disgraceful, and Lord Goldtree turned him out of doors, and no one knows what has become of him. The last that was seen of him was at the Derby, some years ago, where all the men cut him. Such cheek it was of him to go! He has never dared show his face in decent society again. Oh! he was as bad as he could be," and pretty little Mrs. Cecil made a gesture of disdainful contempt. "He was the eldest, too. It was a good thing for Charlie, my husband, for he will inherit nearly everything. It's only a bother he can't have the title. That must be Will's as long as he lives. But those sort of men always come to a bad end, sometime. I dare say he's out in America, in those wild parts, where men are always shooting each other."

"And you think Mr. Cecil may get shot, too," said her companion, looking thoughtfully at pretty Mrs. Charles Cecil.

It was an experience for this companion, to sit listening to this smiling chatter, in which a man's ruined life and his probable ignominious death were all discoursed in the same tone as the dinner-party of the night before, and the new dress that was to be.

"Oh, yes. Will would never keep out

of a row, if there were one going on! And, really, it would be quite a merciful dispensation of Providence for us all. For him, too, in fact. He would never dare return to England. Lord Goldtree declares he will have him arrested directly he sets foot in England, and, though he is his eldest son, have him tried like any common man. And he would too! Just think of the disgrace! A public trial. With all the papers full of it for any common person to read! I should die of the shame of it! And so I always tell Charlie! And I'm sure I don't know how Charlie and I would get on if the old man did forgive him. For he used to give Will everything, and now of course we have it. But it was really dreadful before for us!" And the pretty baby face looked hard and angry for a moment. But the smiles returned. "Anyway, it's all right now. And, by-the-by, Miss Carr, I have decided on having the gown Madame Marie described. It's too lovely! And after all I shall be able to pay her some time"—"when the old man's gone," she was going to say, but checked herself. It was a mere instinct that made her hesitate. She did not mind what she said to her companion. She liked her in her way, and was kind to her. But, for anything else, the companion might have been made of different flesh and blood, so little did it matter to her what Miss Carr thought of her.

"Just write that note to her, and now I am going upstairs to dress." She fluttered, in her pretty morning gown, out of the room, and left Miss Carr to write the note. Miss Carr wrote it, and then, walking over to the fireplace, stood for awhile looking down into the flames. It was a grey January day, but the chill and the fog outside seemed a long way off from the pretty room, with its warm, fragrant air. There were soft hangings, and lovely flowers, and all the dainty luxuries that women, such as Mrs. Charles Cecil, gather about them. This was one of the suite of rooms set apart for her and her husband's use in Lord Goldtree's town house; and they had furnished them after their own fancy, which, it must be owned, was an extremely luxurious and costly fancy. The father lived in his own suite of apartments, and the two households, under the same roof, were entirely distinct. This suite used, at one time, to belong to the elder son, who had disgraced himself.

Miss Carr had come into Mrs. Charles's household, as companion, six months before.

Up till then she had been earning her bread as a governess. But her health had given way, and the doctor had suggested easier employment. Through the interest of a friend she had succeeded in obtaining her present position—Mrs. Charles having been suddenly possessed of a new caprice to have a companion. It can scarcely be said that Miss Carr found her present employment easier. The work might have been lighter at times; and there were even days of complete holiday, when Mrs. Charles almost seemed to forget her existence. But there were many things so eminently distasteful to her, that at moments she felt her position intolerable. One of her most trying duties was to have to sit and listen to Mrs. Charles Cecil's chatter. Her face, as she stood gazing into the fire, entirely expressed her feeling on the subject. It might rather have startled gay, selfish, unthinking little Mrs. Charles. Now Miss Carr had, of course, heard of the elder son's sins. They were sins that the best of women find hard to forgive. Miss Carr despised, and even hated him, as far as it was possible to hate an unknown sinner; but Mrs. Charles's chatter revolted her. After all, he was a human being, and her husband's brother. To hear his probable death in some drunken brawl discussed in that hopeful fashion, with the regretful longing after the title, the only thing left to the outcast of his inheritance, filled her with disgust. That outcast might be miserable, starving, while his sister-in-law was squandering thousands on unnecessary toilettes. Her thoughts went back to the man she had once helped. She had never quite forgotten him, though the years that had followed the scene by the garden-fence had been full enough of their own troubles and toil to deaden the interests of her more childish days. This man, too, might have drifted downwards from such a world as this. She smiled a little at her own fancy of the disobedient gods; but the smile was half sad. She had been full of fancies in those days. She did not seem to have many left now. Perhaps she had not time for them.

"It is as well," she said, turning from the fire. "They weren't much good, after all."

As she went back to the writing-table to continue the notes she had to write, one of the footmen entered the room, and brought her over a letter. She took it from the silver salver, wondering who her correspondent was. The footman told her

it had been left at the door by a woman yesterday afternoon, and that it had been forgotten. He seemed genuinely sorry at the neglect, for Miss Carr was liked by all the servants, and she forgave him. But as she opened it, her colour changed. The note came upon her like a voice from the dead past, of which she had been thinking. The summer evening, the lonely lane, even herself, little more than a child, holding her roses, came back to her.

"If you have not forgotten your sweet charity of ten years ago, if you can trust the man to whom you then gave help and hope, will you meet him this evening at five o'clock by the fountain at the Serpentine, on the right-hand side?"

She sat reading the note over and over in a bewildered fashion. Suddenly she sprang to her feet. "This evening!" Why, that meant yesterday. It was dated yesterday morning. And they had not given it to her. And he had perhaps gone, and— Then a revulsion set in. What did it mean? How did he know she was here? What did he want with her? Of course she could not go! It was impertinent. It was a joke, perhaps. At five o'clock it would be quite dark. And in the gardens, too, which would be so lonely and empty, at that hour! Miss Carr continued to write her notes. But by the end of luncheon, which she had alone, one thought which had been present all the time she had performed her tasks, took complete possession of her. He had perhaps gone there yesterday, and waited, and waited, and at last gone away, thinking that the charity that had helped him once had grown cold.

At half-past four she left the house. She was free that afternoon. Mrs. Cecil had lunched out, and was paying a round of visits. No one ever troubled where she went for her walk. And this afternoon she went towards the gardens. Perhaps she would not have gone, but for the delay in the letter. If he had gone, she felt she owed him some reparation. It was scarcely likely that he would go again to-day. But he might; and he might need help. She reached the fountain at last. It was dark now, and the gardens full of a chill, white mist. As she came up to the basin's edge, she brushed suddenly against a tall figure. She thought first it was a workman, for he was dressed in the rough clothes of an artisan. But as she uttered an apology, he said something, and she found that it was the man she had come to meet.

"It is a good thing you tumbled against me," he said, with a laugh, "for we should never have seen each other. I was just wondering——"

"I couldn't come yesterday," she began, hurriedly, feeling very glad he had come again, after all, and yet half frightened, both at him for having done so, and at herself for being there now, too.

"It was only too good of you to come to-day," he said, in a different voice. "Yesterday, as I waited, I thought what a presumptuous fool you must have thought me! After ten years. I should never have dared, had not I——" He stopped short.

It was too dark for them to see each other's faces clearly, but their eyes were beginning to grow accustomed to the dusk. He was looking down earnestly at her, and again she thought of the young girl with the roses, in the summer evening light, and was glad that it was now so dark. The next she was ashamed of that flash of foolish, regretful, woman's vanity.

"I hope you have been well and happy since then," she said, gently, lifting her face to him so that he might see the changes of those few years if he would.

"I have been—well," he said, with a half-bitter, half-mocking note in his voice that jarred on her a little. "But I did not ask you here to speak of myself; it was of you."

"Of me?"

"Yes. Your grandfather is dead. He has been dead nearly eight years now, has not he? And you have worked ever since for your daily bread, and the old house is shut up, and it must not even be sold."

"How do you know all this?" with an astonished, half-angered note in her voice.

He answered the last.

"Do not think I have been prying into your affairs from idle curiosity. Indeed, it is only within the last week, I have known all this. I came over to England for some business, and I had to go down to Broadford, and I went to your house to make enquiries after you."

"Don't think me impertinent," gently, as she drew back a step. "I must tell you all the story. I have just come from America. There, I came across a man; he told me a strange thing. All the stranger because I had once met you; because you had once been so good to me. The man was dying. He is dead now; but what he told me seemed important enough to give me the excuse of asking to see you. Your

grandfather had a brother who once defrauded him of a large inheritance. At least, he thought his brother did."

"He did," with proud anger. She, too, had espoused the dead man's cause.

A slight smile parted his lips.

"You must not always judge by appearances," he said, in an odd voice.

"I want you to give me the permission to thoroughly search your old house. It was shut up when I was there. The daughter of your grandfather's old servant, who lives there, would not, of course, let me enter. For certain reasons of my own, I did not want to go to your lawyer. I would have written and asked your permission without forcing this interview upon you; but I was afraid. Naturally, you would not have granted such an apparently extraordinary request. But I hoped, if I saw you, I could make you understand better. Give me leave. I promise you you shall never regret it! Any more than I shall ever forget that vision I had of you ten years ago. But for you——"

He broke off. There was a short silence. Then she held out her hand.

"You may do as you wish. I will write to Jane."

He took her hand, and bending swiftly, kissed it. Not as he had kissed the folds of her dress long ago; but with a tender reverence that killed in her heart the last feeling of fear for him that might have lingered there. He walked a little way back with her through the dusk and mist; but left her directly they came to a more frequented part.

"I wish I dared see you into a cab outside," he said, abruptly, as he parted from her. "But it would not do for you. I wish some one else could do for you what I am going to do. But I promised. I will only ask one promise from you, and that is, that you will never speak to any one of the share I have had in it."

She gave the promise.

About a quarter of an hour later, as he, too, turned out of the garden gates, he stopped for a moment under the gas-lamp, undecided, for a moment, which way to turn. London was not a safe place for him to be in, even in his present disguise. He put up his hand and pushed his hat a

little back from his face. He hoped Miss Carr would write at once to the woman in charge. He must run down the next day. There was danger in delay. Besides, for his own sake, he would be glad to get out of England again. The associations were too painful. As he stood hesitating, a brougham passed. Mrs. Charles Cecil, who was in it, happened to bend forward, and caught sight of the tall, well-built workman, just as he lifted his hand to his cap.

The brougham rolled on into the gaslit dusk of the winter's night. Mrs. Charles Cecil leant back in the brougham, white and chill as the mist outside.

When her husband came home from his club, that afternoon, she met him at his dressing-room door. He saw that something had disturbed her, and he followed her rather anxiously into the room.

She put up her hand to sign to him that her maid was in the room beyond, and then whispered:

"Will is in London. I saw him to-night, dressed as a common workman. We must get rid of him, somehow!"

His face reflected the anger and fear on hers. He nodded. They could not say much more at the moment; but all the time they were dressing for dinner, they thought it over. They both came to the same conclusion. In spite of the handsome allowance made them by the old man, they were terribly in debt. Should the father relent towards his firstborn, they were ruined.

"And your father does think of him," said Mrs. Cecil, with spiteful anger. "He isn't as angry as he was. If they met, goodness only knows what tomfoolery he might not be guilty of. There is only one thing that he wouldn't get over—public disgrace."

"You mean, we had better get him arrested for that forgery," said her husband, in a strange, low tone.

"Don't put it all on me!" sharply, with a slight shiver. "You think so, as well as me!"

"There's no doubt, if Will were once publicly——"

"Charles, you know your father would never leave the estate to a man who had stood on his trial."